

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 CIAE-00

DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04

RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20 SAM-01 IO-14 AID-20 PC-10

DRC-01 OMB-01 /130 W

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O P 051640Z FEB 74

FM AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4645

INFO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY MANAGUA PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA PRIORITY

USCINCSO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAN SALVADOR 0455

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, ES, HO

SUBJECT: GOES CONFIRMS POSTPONEMENT OF CHIEFS OF STATE MEETING

REF: (A) MANAGUA 446

(B) SAN SALVADOR 4749

(C) SAN SALVADOR 376

USCINCSO FOR POLAD

GUATEMALA FOR RECAP

1. LOCAL PRESS CARRIES GOES COMMUNIQUE CONFIRMING THAT PRESIDENT MOLINA WILL NOT ATTEND FEBRUARY 8 MEETINGS OF CHIEFS OF STATE IN NICARAGUA. IT REITERATES MOLINA'S INTEREST IN RESOLVING REGIONAL PROBLEMS, BUT NOTES THAT PRESIDENT FEELS THAT SUMMIT WOULD BETTER BE HELD AFTER MARCH 10 LEGISLATIVE/MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS SO THAT NEGOTIATIONS WOULD NOT BECOME AN ISSUE IN THE POLITICAL CAMPAIGN. IT ALSO CONTENDS THAT MOLINA'S CURRENT WORK SCHEDULE MAKES SUCH A
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MEETING IMPOSSIBLE AT THIS TIME. GOES DECISION FOLLOWS PUBLICITY

OF FON MIN FACIO'S COMMENTS FROM COSTA RICA FEBRUARY 4 IN WHICH HE REFERS TO ALLEGEDLY SECRET CA SUMMIT TO BE HELD SHORTLY IN NICARAGUA AS WELL AS A PRESS ITEM FROM GUATEMALA QUOTING COSTA RICAN SOURCES, WHICH CITES FEB.8 DATE FOR PROPOSED MEETING.

2. COMMENT: MOLINA'S REFUSAL TO PARTICIPATE IN THE JALAPA MEETING CAME AS NO GREAT SURPRISE ONCE THE SUMMIT WAS PUBLICLY PINPOINTED. AS WE NOTED IN REF B LAST DECEMBER IN OUR ANALYSIS OF SALVADOR'S PROBABLE COURSES OF ACTION FOLLOWING THE CONCLUSION OF THE MEXICO TALKS, THE GOES' FIRST PREFERENCE WOULD BE TO DEFER ANY FURTHER NEGOTIATIONS ON THE HONDURAS/EL SALVADOR ISSUE UNTIL AFTER THE MARCH ELECTIONS. ITS LESS FAVORED BUT STILL ACCEPTABLE ALTERNATIVE WOULD BE SECRET, INFORMAL DISCUSSIONS DURING THE ELECTORAL PERIOD. UNACCEPTABLE WOULD BE PUBLICIZED NEGOTIATIONS BEFORE MARCH WHICH IS WHAT THE PROPOSED JALAPA MEETING, FOR ALL INTENTS AND PURPOSES, HAD BECOME. THE GOES SENSITIVITY ON THIS ISSUE WAS REITERATED TO ME ONLY RECENTLY BY FONMIN BORGONOVO (REF C).

3. IT IS NOW EVIDENT THAT THE GOES WILL AVOID ANY NEGOTIATIONS ON THE HONDURAS QUESTION KNOWN TO THE PUBLIC WHILE THE ELECTORAL CAMPAIGN IS IN PROGRESS. THE OPPOSITION PARTIES, WHO ARE SUFFERING A DEARTH OF POPULAR ISSUES THIS YEAR, WOULD NO DOUBT WELCOME ANY OPPORTUNITY TO QUESTION THE GOVERNMENT'S NEGOTIATING POSTURE VIS A VIS HONDURAS, ESPECIALLY SINCE THE OFFICIAL PARTY IS ATTEMPTING TO WRAP ITSELF IN THE FLAG AND NATIONALIST SLOGANS IN THIS CAMPAIGN. HOWEVER, RENEWED NEGOTIATIONS WITH HONDURAS WOULD BE A DELICATE DOMESTIC MATTER EVEN IF NO POLITICAL CAMPAIGN WERE IN PROGRESS. THE HIGHLY DEFENSIVE POSTURE ASSUMED BY THE MOLINA GOVERNMENT IN RESPONSE TO PUBLIC CRITICISM ABOUT EL SALVADOR'S POSITION AT THE MEXICO NEGOTIATIONS IS INDICATIVE OF THE SENSITIVITY WITH WHICH THE GOES VIEWS THIS QUESTION, REGARDLESS OF PARTISAN POLITICAL DEBATE. WHILE IT WILL BE SOMEWHAT EASIER TO RENEW TALKS AFTER MARCH THE GOES WILL REMAIN EXTREMELY CAUTIOUS ABOUT THE FORM OF ITS PARTICIPATION. AS WE HAVE SEEN AT THE RECENT CABEI MEETING, THE MOLINA GOVERNMENT FEELS ITSELF INCREASINGLY COMPELLED TO TAKE A TOUGHER STANCE IN VIEW OF WHAT IT PERCEIVES TO BE CONTINUED HONDURAS INTRANSIGENCE IN BI-LATERAL NEGOTIATIONS AND ON REGIONAL MATTERS SUCH AS CACM RESTRUCTURING.

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